



High school teachers at the first SAEON workshop



## SAEON SAEON Reaches Out with Green Fingers

Last weekend thirteen high school educators attended a workshop at Letaba Camp in Kruger National Park (KNP), the first of a series of events run by South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON). SAEON's Environmental Outreach Programme aims to enhance training in our region in the field of science, particularly environmental science. The end goals of the programme are to support and better inform the educators, and to run environmental science projects with schools to train the youngsters.

The newly established SAEON, which works closely with South African National

Parks amongst others, decided to make the savannah regions of the lowveld one of its focal areas. Funded by the National Research Foundation, SAEON Ndlovu Node (as the Phalaborwa office is called) aims to establish long term ecological monitoring in the region. This data will help us understand the effects of global change on our ecosystems. SAEON will also facilitate and promote research needed to understand the mechanisms behind the change, and thus to be able to better inform policy on land use in the future.

Last weekend's Educator Support Workshop included presentations by

scientists from the KNP and the Transvaal Museum (TM). Dr A Deacon (KNP) presented on the subject of biodiversity; Mr H Sithole spoke about the invertebrates of KNP; Dr Rob Toms (TM) spoke about Mopane worm ecology and sustainable harvesting; and SAEON's own Dr Dave Balfour presented global change and the science of elephant management.

The presentations, which will continue through the year, were interspersed with small groups of educators tackling tasks and reporting back. SAEON hope to work with an increasing number of people as the programme matures.